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WORLD'S CONGRESSES IN AMERICA.

It has been proposed that a series of World's Congresses be held in connection with the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, and the World's Congress Auxiliary has been duly authorized and organized, to promote the holding and success of such congresses.

Among the themes which the congresses are expected to consider, are the following:

I. The grounds of fraternal union in the language, literature, domestic life, religion, science, art and civil institutions of different peoples.

II. The economic, industrial and financial problems of the age.

III. Educational systems, their advantages and their defects; and the means by which they may best be adapted to the recent enormous increase in all departments of knowledge.

IV. The practicability of a common language, for use in the commercial relations of the civilized world.

V. International copyright, and the laws of intellectual property and commerce.

VI. Immigration and naturalization laws, and the proper international privileges of alien governments, and their subjects or citizens.

VII. The most efficient and advisable means of preventing or decreasing pauperism, insanity and crime; and of increasing productive ability, prosperity and virtue throughout the world.

VIII. International law as a bond of union, and a means of mutual protection; and how it may best be enlarged, perfected and authoritatively expressed.

IX. *The establishment of the principles of judicial justice, as the supreme law of international relations; and the general substitution of arbitration for war, in the settlement of international controversies.*

It is impossible to estimate the advantages that would result from the mere establishment of personal acquaintance and friendly relations among the leaders of the intellectual and moral world, who now, for the most part, know each other only through the interchange of publications, and perhaps, the formalities of correspondence.

And what is transcendently more important, such congresses, convened under circumstances so auspicious, would doubtless surpass all previous efforts to bring about a real fraternity of nations, and unite the enlightened people of the whole earth in a general co-operation for the attainment of the great ends for which human society is organized.

The officers are: Charles C. Bonney, President; Thomas B. Bryan, vice-president; Lyman J. Gage, treasurer; Benjamin Butterworth, secretary.—*Peacemaker*.

THE VISION OF CHRIST.

MRS. L. ORMISTON CHANT.

"O Christ, dear Master, if I could but see thee face to face, and feel the reality of thy blessed life," I prayed.

But at that moment my servant came to me with a broken cup, much prized, and now useless; and, after coldly remarking that she ought to have had more care, I bade her go away and not disturb me. So she went away, unhappy and unforgiven.

"O Christ, dear Master, if I could but hear thy blessed tones speaking to me," I prayed yet again. . . .

But a little disturbing voice cried loudly and sadly at my door for a broken doll, and I bade the baby go away and not break in upon my quiet hour.

"O Christ, dear Master, if I could but have a token of thy personal love for me," I prayed yet a third time. . . .

But no voice nor vision came to me, so I rose from my praying, and went about in the house. My servant sang not as usual over her work, nor did she greet me as I passed; and there in a corner, asleep, with the recent tears on the little pale cheek, lay the child and her broken doll, and her first great grief.

And somewhere in my heart a voice spoke out clear, so that I could not choose but hear: "Forever and forever, I, the Christ, am that which asks for love and compassion. These asked for both from thee, and thou gavest not. Thou shouldst have looked for me in them, and they would then have found me in thee. Thou canst not find me until thou art able to lose thyself in love and compassion. If thou wouldst know me, thou must be me."

So I picked up the baby and her broken doll, and spoke words of tender good cheer to my servant, and led them both out into the sweet garden and the afternoon sunshine, to gather flowers and fruit, till by and by the air was full of laughter, and smiles were on all our faces.

Oh, then I knew that behind our smiles was the face of Christ, and in our happy tones his voice!

For Christ is the love that redeems, and the compassion that heals, and the unselfishness that brings joy and makes man happy, even as God is happy.—*The Unitarian. London.*

THE PRESENT STATE OF ITALY.

The coming Peace Congress at Rome imparts special interest to the following letter which we quote from the correspondent of the *Boston Journal*. He omits the underlying evil and chief cause of Italian poverty and misery, viz., bankruptcy and starvation incurred by former wars and the present "armed Peace."

When one visits for the first time this country, where nature has united all her charms and where art has done much to embellish the works of man, one voluntarily abandons oneself to a transport of enthusiasm. What a glorious country, one exclaims. How beautiful! How picturesque! Life must be one perpetual day-dream in this sunny land of poetry and romance, thinks the superficial tourist. The natives seem ever happy, ever free from care. They sing sweet songs as they work in the fields, and they play on the mandoline beneath your window in town on moonlight nights. All is poetry and beauty everywhere. The lovely verses of Virgil that you learnt long years ago come back to your recollection, and, as you look upon the beautiful scenery, you think that this is the best and loveliest land in all the world, after your own. But Italy is deceptive. It is like a stage decoration. Behind the beautiful scenery lies squalor, bare poverty and degradation. Beneath the shady trees is filth, crumbling ruins and dirt. The deep, dark shadows hide unpleasant things from the eye, perhaps; but they are there. The warm, glorious Italian sun casts a golden glamour over everything, but it is only surface deep. "Scratch a Turk and find a Tartar." Look beneath the surface in Italy and all the poetry is gone. Bare poverty stares you in the face. The soil is beautiful but unproductive. It is an undulating, compli-

cated, charming and, at the same time, detestable country. Your judgment of it all depends from your point of view. The artist sees nothing in Italy but picturesque beauty, glorious sunlight, clear atmosphere and a heavenly blue sky. The poet dreams of nothing but the old poetical romances connected with nearly every old Italian house. The philosopher wonders at the apparent contentment of the people. The practical business man sees no chance for making money in Italy, so hurries on to newer lands across the sea. The hurrying "globe-trotter" does the sights (and there are many of them) as well as time will admit, and carries away from the land of Dante a vague but pleasant souvenir.

Let us look at Italy as it really is, and try and form a correct opinion of the country. This is not our first trip here; in fact, it is our third, so we will not contemplate this land with the eyes of a tourist, but rather as a temporary resident. It is not easy to form an unbiassed judgment. On every hand beauty of form and outline assails your artistic taste and makes you forget (if you are not careful) the stern reality. But if you have no artistic appreciation—and there are some unfortunate people born without any—you are apt to be too much biassed in the other direction, and ignore the good, the true and the beautiful that still exist in the land of Virgil. The impressions made upon the mind of a thoughtful foreigner by a residence in Italy are complicated and numerous. How can one sum up in a few lines the spirit of the land? How resume in a single formula all the petty hatred of unpleasant things, all the sincere sympathies of other agreeable ones, that impress the dweller in the Italy of to-day? To say that there is nothing good, nothing noble, nothing worthy here, is untrue. To say that all is beauty, peace, prosperity and contentment, is equally false.

I said that Italy is deceptive. So it is. The beautiful groves of olive and orange trees only cast a leafy shade over the misery of a sterile soil; just as broad boulevards and long rows of ugly houses, new but empty, deceive the eye as to the finances of a ruined city like Rome, which is now in bankruptcy. A fifth part of the territory of this lovely peninsula is not fit for any kind of cultivation, and two other fifths are only mediocre. The abrupt foot-hills of the Alps and Apennines are only covered by scant, scrubby forests, while the low, marshy lands near the coast are not good even for pasturage. The thoughtlessness of fifty generations of men has changed the climate and compromised the salubrity of the country. The woody heights have recklessly been despoiled of trees, and this has seriously affected the rainfall. Land that formerly produced abundant harvests now has to endure alternate inundations and drouth. The climate is not always perfect here by any means. The winters are never as severe as in our New England, but all around Florence, for instance, the snow falls and the cold "tramontana" winds blow. In summer the hot, desert-born "chirocco" parches up every thing and enervates man and beast. South of Naples, to be sure, the climate is always mild and generally sunny, and roses bloom in the open air all winter. But that is not all of Italy. A German writer who has studied the subject profoundly (as they do everything) declares that one will have to go as far as Scandinavia to find in Europe a country as little favored by nature as Italy. This seems like an exaggeration. Even Spain, he says, is superior to Italy as an agricultural land. I know that this is not what is generally thought of Italy in America; but, alas! it is true.

The most insurmountable obstacles that oppose any

progress in Italian agriculture are the heavy taxes imposed on land. In no other country is such a considerable portion of the net revenue from agriculture absorbed by the public treasury. Annual taxes amounting to more than 300,000,000 of francs are collected, and this is not equally divided. The mean average should be 9 francs per head, but in Lombardy the inhabitants have to pay at the rate of 18 francs each, which is equal to about 60 per cent. of the net revenue from their lands. The industrious Italian peasant, who is a hard worker, patient, sober and economical, might have endured the heavy taxes if an agricultural crisis—the end of which is not yet—had not suddenly lowered the price of all products of the soil. Italian wheat has had to suffer from the concurrence of that from America and Russia. Now we come to the consideration of wine, the supreme resource of a country whose climate and soil are so marvellously adapted to the cultivation of the vine. Signor Crispi, the late Prime Minister, denounced the treaty of commerce with France. The consequence was that most of the wine growers of Italy lost their chief customers.

The miserable habitations of the poor rural workers do not conform to any of the ordinary rules of decency or health. Although the climate is generally mild, these rickety houses do not protect their numerous dwellers against the rigors of extreme seasons. Their food is insufficient. The poor, hard working, sober peasants are obliged to live on very little. They do not have meat oftener than once a month, if even then. Their chief diet is "polenta," a kind of meal made from corn, which resembles what we call, in the country, "chicken feed." Official documents go to prove that in certain provinces the inhabitants of the country eat nothing else. "Polenta" in the morning and "polenta" at night. This "polenta" begets a disease known as the "polenta" malady, from which other nations do not suffer. The misery in Italy is pitiable, the people suffer dreadfully from over-taxation, lack of money and other things, yet they manage to be more cheerful and contented than one would expect. The Italian has learned how to be comparatively happy on nothing a year. KARL KAROLY.

THE PROBLEM OF WAR.

REV. ABEL STEVENS, D. D.

The problem of war—what are its prospects?

1. As was shown, in a former article, it is likely to be "absorbed," and finally solved, by the great labor problem now overshadowing the civilized world—the problem of the rectification, not to say the reorganization, of the condition of the working masses.

The common people are the substance of any nation. They, indeed, make the world; and the time has come, in the progress of civilization, in which the legislation and government of nations must be for the "masses," and not for classes. This is the logical upshot of current history; the true generalization of the idea of modern civilization. That idea is revealed in the ever-increasing ascendancy of popular power, founded in the supremacy of the popular rights and interests. It is democracy in its best sense; and that means the equality and fraternity of men, as "implicitly," if not "explicitly," taught by Christianity. It is the underlying idea of Christian civilization, and hence, as we have seen, the labor problem, and all kindred problems, are geographically limited to Christendom.